

November 19, 2003

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

**Del Rio Woods Recreation and Park District,
Temporary Dam Project, WDID No. 1B03035WNSO
Sonoma County**

On March 4, 2003, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Justice Donald B. King, on behalf of the Del Rio Woods Recreation and Park District, requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Del Rio Woods Recreation and Park District, Temporary Dam Project in Sonoma County. The application was deemed complete on August 22, 2003. The proposed project causes disturbances to waters of the state associated with the Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.00.

The proposed project is located in the Russian River approximately 3 miles east and upstream of the town of Healdsburg, at 2795 N. Fitch Road, UTM 10S 515033mE, 4274578mN, Sonoma County, California. The purpose of the project is to construct a temporary seasonal inflatable dam to create a recreational impoundment.

Over the past two years, staff from the Regional Water Board, California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), and members and representatives of the Del Rio Woods Recreation and Park District (DRWRPD) have had several meetings, including a Regional Water Board Meeting on September 26, 2002, to devise a project that significantly reduces the impacts to the beneficial uses of the Russian River. The current proposed project is the culmination of over two years of efforts by the above mentioned parties to come to agreement on an appropriate project, and it is designed to significantly decrease environmental impacts that result from the construction, removal and associated impoundment of the dam structure.

The proposed project involves the installation of a 6-foot high temporary water-filled rubber dam across the Russian River at the Del Rio Woods Recreation Area, which remains in place for approximately 10 weeks during the summer months to create an approximately 4.8 acre impoundment in the Russian River. The overall dam structure to be created will be constructed of both a 6-foot high water-filled rubber bladder (bladder) to be placed across the main portion of the dam structure and placement of approximately 450 cubic yards of instream gravel on the adjacent near-shore gravel bar. The gravel to be used on the near-shore area is needed to hold the bladder in place, and will be obtained from the existing nearby gravel bars. At least one-half of the instream gravel will be collected from the downstream area. All instream gravel to be used to create the berms, will be collected during the summer low-flow regime, and will only be done on the dry portions of the gravel bars. Therefore no turbidity/sediment discharge into the river is anticipated.

The dam structure will create an impoundment of approximately 4.8 acres, with widths ranging from 30 to 180 feet wide, and a length of approximately 2,000 feet. Depths are expected to max out at 8 feet. In order to reduce the potential impacts to migrating salmonids, the Del Rio Woods dam structure will be installed after the Healdsburg Memorial Dam is installed, and removed before the Healdsburg Memorial Dam is removed. Generally, installation is expected to commence between June 30 and July 3, with removal taking place between September 8 and September 11th. The dam structure will not be installed if Russian River flows exceed 250 cubic feet per second (cfs), nor is it anticipated that it will be in operation in flows greater than 300 cfs.

The dam structure will be moved slightly upstream from the historic site of the seasonal dam structure. The spillway will be created as part of the inflatable dam. The historic dam consisted of earthen berms created on two sides of a permanent spillway structure, which was created using clean gravels collected on the nearby gravel bars. The installation and removal of the earthen berms used in the historic dam structure resulted in significant turbidity and sediment releases to the Russian River, which violated state and Federal water quality standards.

The proposed project includes several mitigation measures designed to reduce the potential impacts to water quality and the biological resources of the Russian River. No compensatory mitigation is proposed since the impacts are temporary and not permanent. The DRWRPD will ensure that following non-compensatory mitigation measures are implemented, which are also outlined in the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

- To reduce the potential of creating a migration barrier to salmonids, the construction of the dam structure will occur after the construction of the Healdsburg Memorial Dam, between June 30 and July 3 or later, and removal of the Del Rio Woods dam will occur before the removal of the Healdsburg Memorial Dam, generally between September 8 and 11th;
- DRWRPD will construct the 450-cubic yard earthen berm portion of the dam outside the presence of flowing water;
- DRWRPD will not remove the gravel portion of the dam mechanically; it will be redistributed by the river during winter high flow events;
- DRWRPD will ensure that at least one-half of the material used for the gravel berm will be collected from the downstream near-shore gravel bar areas, increasing the opportunity for the gravel berms to be redistributed during winter high flows to the skimmed bars downstream, thus reducing sediment loads downstream.

Establishment of a maintenance and monitoring program and associated performance criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation measures, which include:

- turbidity measurements at frequent intervals prior to and during dam installation and removal (< 20 percent increase over background);
- turbidity measurements on a weekly interval during the summer season (< 20 percent increase over background);
- impoundment/pool mapping by air photo(>0.6 acres of inundated area);
- impoundment/pool depth measurements (> 30 percent of pool area, > 3 feet deep)
- pool complexity and habitat evaluation (overhanging vegetation/complex stream structures created)
- wildlife observation (wildlife viewing opportunities)
- and temperature measurements at regular intervals, within the impoundment and downstream (reducing instream temperatures in Russian River in impoundment and/or downstream).

The Del Rio Woods Recreation and Park District (DRWRPD), as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this project qualifies for a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A Notice of Determination was prepared by the DRWRPD on May 31, 2003, SCH No. 2003042161.

The nearest receiving water is the Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.00.

The project is scheduled to begin yearly between June 30 and July 3, and end between September 8-11, for a total of five years, which is the length of applicable permits. Staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act Authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Andrew Jensen at (707) 576-2683, or at jensa@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.